

Friis, John

From: Kathryn Conroy [conroykat@reg8.k12.ct.us]
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To: Friis, John
Subject: RE: testimony against 944

Attachments: WL Testimony.doc



WL Testimony.doc
(40 KB)

Good Morning,

I have also attached my testimony.
Thank you for your attention to this matter.
-Kathryn Conroy, Latin Teacher, Regional District #8

Good morning Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee: I am Kathryn Conroy and I am a Latin teacher at RHAM Middle School and High School in Hebron, Connecticut

If world language is taken off the table as a graduation requirement for high school students in Connecticut, we will send the message to our students and children world language acquisition, proficiency, and all the benefits associated with learning a new language have no value.

Before I began working as a Latin teacher I was employed by a global consulting company in Hartford. Once I began working I was told that on my resume what drew the most notice was that I had studied Latin since middle school and majored in Classics in college. While a multi-national corporation did not have a need for my skills in Latin, what I was able to show was that I was capable of learning and having success with a challenging subject, which they believed would translate into achievement in the field of consulting. The company I worked for picked up on what research on world language acquisition has indicated for decades, that students who take a second language have a better understanding of their own language (Demont, 2001), perform better on their ACT and SAT test (Olsen, 1992 ; Eddy, 1981), achieve higher standardized test scores across the board than their peers who do not study a language (Carr, 1994; Johnson, 1963; Sheridan, 1976), and develop better understandings and positive attitudes toward non-English speakers (Riestra, 1962):

All new-hires throughout the company are sent to Chicago for two weeks to receive training on company practices and policies. During my training session, the Americans were easily out numbered by the French and Germans; other nations represented included Luxemburg, Turkey, Spain, Ireland, Switzerland, Portugal, Denmark, New Zealand, and Brazil. At dinner the first night, we could tell that our multi-lingual counterparts had the advantage, mixing and mingling among themselves, easily switching between languages. Only a handful of my American co-workers were bilingual and because of this, most of us missed out on valuable opportunities expand our professional network.

During training we reviewed many upcoming global projects and I learned that despite my technical skills and business experiences I would be prevented from participating because I did not have a command of French or Portuguese. These experiences only served to highlight the same situation our students will face upon graduation and entry into the working world; they will vie for jobs against other students. If we wish to give Connecticut students a fighting chance in an ever-expanding global economy, particularly given the current economic climate, we need to make second language acquisition an imperative.

Thank you for your time.

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